

CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A flotation device for maintaining an aircraft in a floating and stable condition, the aircraft having an outer surface, the flotation device comprising:

at least one flotation bladder mounted to the outer surface of the aircraft; and

inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder;

monitoring means for determining the occurrence of a predetermined event;

wherein the inflation of the flotation bladder occurs upon the predetermined event; and

wherein the flotation bladders can be used during emergency landings on land or water.

Claim 2 (original): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein the inflation of the flotation bladder is selected from the group consisting of automatic and manual.

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein the predetermined event is a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft.

Claim 6 (original): The flotation device of claim 1, and further comprising:

a float switch activating a valve upon a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft, the valve connected to the inflation means for activating the inflation means.

Claim 7 (original): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein the flotation bladder is in a substantially flattened spiral configuration prior to inflation.

Claim 8 (previously amended): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein the flotation bladder comprises a plurality of flotation bladders, each flotation bladder being independently inflatable.

Claim 9 (previously amended): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein at least one of the flotation bladders has coloring and markings.

Claim 10 (original): The flotation device of claim 1 wherein the activation of the flotation bladder triggers an emergency beacon.

Claim 11 (previously canceled).

Claim 12 (original): An emergency buoyant support for an aircraft in the water, the emergency buoyant support comprising:

- a cover releasably secured to the aircraft;
- at least one inflatable flotation bladder positioned between the cover and the aircraft;
- wherein upon inflation of the flotation bladder, the flotation bladder moves the cover in a general direction away from the aircraft.

Claim 13 (original): The emergency buoyant support of claim 12, and further comprising:
a carrier mounted to the aircraft.

Claim 14 (original): The emergency buoyant support of claim 12, and further comprising:
inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder; and
a gas supply tubing connected to the inflation means, the flotation bladder being secured to the gas supply tubing such that gas flowing through the gas supply tubing inflates the flotation bladder.

Claim 15 (original): The emergency buoyant support of claim 14, and further comprising:
a float switch activating a valve upon a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft, the valve connected to the inflation means for activating the inflation means; and
a gas supply connected to the gas supply tubing and the float switch.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method for maintaining an aircraft in the water in a stable floating condition, the aircraft having an outer surface, the method comprising:

mounting at least one flotation bladder to the outer surface of the aircraft;
inflating the flotation bladder upon occurrence of a predetermined event
activating an emergency beacon upon inflation of the flotation bladder; and
using the flotation bladders during emergency landings on land or water.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
inflating the flotation bladder automatically or manually.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
monitoring the occurrence of the predetermined event.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
activating a valve upon a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft, the valve
connected to the inflation means for activating the inflation means.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:

Claim 21 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
providing a plurality of flotation bladders, each flotation bladder being independently
inflatable.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 16 and further comprising:
coloring and marking the flotation bladder.

Claim 23 (canceled).

Claim 24 (previously canceled).

Claim 25 (previously amended): A flotation device for maintaining an aircraft in a floating and stable condition, the flotation device comprising:

- at least one flotation bladder mounted to the aircraft;
- inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder; and
- monitoring means for determining the occurrence of the predetermined event.

Claim 26 (previously added): A flotation device for maintaining an aircraft in a floating and stable condition, the flotation device comprising:

- at least one flotation bladder mounted to the aircraft;
- inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder; and
- a float switch activating a valve upon a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft, the valve connected to the inflation means for activating the inflation means.

Claim 27 (previously added): A flotation device for maintaining an aircraft in a floating and stable condition, the flotation device comprising:

- at least one flotation bladder mounted to the aircraft; and
- inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder;
- wherein the flotation bladder is in a substantially flattened spiral configuration prior to inflation.

Claim 28 (previously added): A flotation device for maintaining an aircraft in a floating and stable condition, the flotation device comprising:

- at least one flotation bladder mounted to the aircraft; and
- inflation means for inflating the flotation bladder;
- wherein the activation of the flotation bladder triggers an emergency beacon.

Claim 29 (previously canceled).

Claim 30 (previously added): A method for maintaining an aircraft in the water in a stable floating condition, the method comprising:

mounting at least one flotation bladder to the aircraft;
inflating the flotation bladder upon occurrence of a predetermined event; and
monitoring the occurrence of the predetermined event.

Claim 31 (previously added): A method for maintaining an aircraft in the water in a stable floating condition, the method comprising:

mounting at least one flotation bladder to the aircraft;
inflating the flotation bladder upon occurrence of a predetermined event; and
activating a valve upon a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft, the valve
connected to the inflation means for activating the inflation means.

Claim 32 (previously canceled).

Claim 33 (previously canceled).

Claim 34 (previously added): The flotation device of claim 25 wherein the predetermined event is a predetermined amount of water entering the aircraft.